

**CALFED OPERATIONS COORDINATION GROUP
FEBRUARY 17, 1999 MEETING NOTES AND ACTION ITEMS**

Review of January 13 meeting notes

No revisions were made to the January 13, CALFED Ops meeting notes.

Announcements

The following handouts were provided at the meeting:

1. Preliminary results of AFRP Delta Action 8, USFWS, M. Kjelson
2. SWP Operations Package, DWR, J. Snow
3. CVP Water Year 1999 Water Allocation Announcement, USBR, C. Bowling
4. USBR's 1999 VAMP Forecasted Flows and Exports, USBR, J. Burke
5. San Joaquin flow projections, 1999, USBR, J. Burke
6. Steelhead Trout Critical Habitat Proposed Rule, NMFS, M. Simpson
7. Splittail monthly average salvage at fish facilities, USFWS, M. Vandenberg

No Name Group

Since the last CALFED Ops Group meeting, two NNG conference calls have taken place in an effort to resolve three outstanding issues identified by the SWRCB to be addressed before approval of a USBR petition for joint point of diversion pumping under Order WR 98-9 in calendar year 1999:

- 1) Improved accounting method demonstrating no net increase in CVP diversion.
- 2) JPD response plan for South Delta Water Agency.
- 3) Consensus approval among fishery agencies.

Four environmental stakeholders, (The Environmental Defense Fund, Natural Heritage Institute, Save San Francisco Bay Association, and The Bay Institute) have formally noted their objection to the USBR using JPD to recover impacts for protective fishery actions authorized under CVPIA other than AFRP Delta Action 8. Therefore, the USBR plans to resubmit its JPD petition for an undisputed 17 taf of pumping only. This volume will complete the recovery for pumping losses due to Delta Action 8 incurred during December and January. In December, 14 taf of JPD pumping was utilized under Order WR 95-6 for a partial recovery of Delta Action 8 impacts. The USBR will address JPD for other purposes in a separate petition.

SWRCB

SWRCB is waiting for a formal petition from the USBR for JPD. The Board feels the accounting issue has been adequately addressed and effected parties to the SDWA response plan issue seem to be close to an agreement.

UPDATE: On February 23 the SWRCB granted conditional approval to a February 19 petition from the USBR for JPD in February and March. Just over 16 taf of CVP water was pumped at Banks Pumping Plant February 24 - February 27.

The Board clarified issues brought up at last month's meeting under Delta Operations Criteria. The D-1485 Suisun Marsh Chipps Island flow objective that was cited as potentially controlling operations last month is no longer an applicable objective. The former objective calls for 60 consecutive days of 12,000 cfs for Delta outflow in the January through April period in the currently designated above normal year type. This objective was replaced by a new set of objectives under Order WR 95-6 and continued under the recently passed Order WR 98-9.

Another clarification involved the D-1485 objectives for striped bass survival and salmon migration. These objectives remain applicable to the water right permits held by the DWR and the USBR and will continue to reference Delta outflow in terms of the Delta Outflow Index as referenced in D-1485 (defined in the 1978 WQCP) rather than the Net Delta Outflow Index defined in Orders WR 95-6 and WR 98-9. Also, the water year type will be referenced in terms of Sacramento Valley unimpaired runoff, also known as the Sacramento River Index (SRI), rather than the Sacramento Valley Index (SVI) defined in the Orders WR 95-6 and WR 98-9.

Rebuttal cases for Phase 2A of the Bay-Delta water right hearing (dealing with the responsibility of parties to meet the San Joaquin River Agreement) are winding down and Phase 6 (dealing with the petition of the USBR and DWR for joint point of diversion in the southern Delta) may begin as early as the beginning of March.

Operations

Delta Action 8: On December 29 and 30 the second part of the water year 1998-1999 experiment took place beginning with the total release of approximately 120,000 Coleman late-fall smolts into Georgiana Slough and at Ryde.

Preliminary results indicate a relative interior Delta survival index ratio of 0.37. Relative interior Delta survival is the ratio of the survival indexes of Georgiana Slough and Ryde. The ratio from the early December experiment has been increased from 0.23 to 0.28 due a correction in salvage data. The two additional data points contributed by this year's releases have resulted in a significant relationship ($P < 0.05$) between relative interior Delta survival and average exports.

CVP/SWP Operations Status: The average flows during the previous 7 days were reported as follows:

Net Delta Outflow Index	129,800 cfs
Sacramento River	78,400 cfs
San Joaquin River	12,100 cfs

X2 position remains far downstream of Martinez.

Delta Operations Criteria: Thus far in February, 16 days have been accumulated in excess of X2 requirements at Port Chicago. The total number of excess days accumulated by the end of February will be applied towards X2 requirements for Port Chicago in March.

San Joaquin River / VAMP: The latest VAMP parameter's were presented based on the February 1 forecast as follows:

	90%	50%
San Joaquin 60/20/20 Index Forecast	2.5	3.2
Hydrologic Classification	Dry	Above Normal
1998+1999 60/20/20 Indicator	7	9
Single or Double step in 1999	Double	Double
Forecasted Vernalis Base Flow (cfs)		
April 1-14 (Barrier Constructed)	4,900	6,700
April 15-30	4,100	5,700
May 1-15	3,300	5,200
Target Flow (cfs)	5,700	7,000
Water needed to meet target (TAF)	122	94
Combined CVP/SWP Export target (cfs)	2,250	3,000

USBR is investigating purchasing water in the event supplies are needed in excess of 110 taf to meet target flow. However, the recent wet hydrologic conditions could result in base flows greater than 7,000 cfs.

The San Joaquin River Authority technical committee's hydrology subgroup has yet to determine the contribution of each tributary to meet target flows. DWR has expressed concern that the Committee will not look at possible impacts associated with lower summer flows and lower reservoir levels as a result of the higher VAMP flows in the spring.

Temporary Barriers: DWR will be submitting an operations and monitoring plan to DFG for a spring-run take authorization permit under section 2081 of the Fish and Game code. This process will be separate from the spring-run consultation effort being conducted for the State Water Project. Also, outstanding mitigation issues will need to be resolved with regard to the 1601 permit process.

DWR has current access permits for the three agricultural barriers and the fish barrier at the head of Old River. However, the access permit for the left abutment of the HOR barrier is conditioned upon the installing of six 48" culverts in the barrier.

1999 Operations Plan: The most recent update of the plan shows a net impact of 54 taf using the 90% exceedence hydrology for Water Year 1999. Impacts are due to AFRP Delta Actions 1, 5, and 7, which are the VAMP, May ramping, and July export restriction, respectively. USBR has identified several sources of water that could be used to recover the impacts. These sources include re-operation of MWD storage in Castaic Lake (60 taf), the Kern Water Bank (50 taf), and Kern County Water Agency (50 taf). The MWD re-operation would be used to aid in the San Luis Reservoir low point concern, which was identified as 260 taf at the end of August. This water would have to be repaid by the end of the calendar year. The other sources of water would probably be tapped next spring if the projects could not recover San Luis or upstream storage with wet hydrology.

Fishery Status

Spring-Run / Steelhead Biological Assessment: DWR and USBR staff have entered into consultation with NMFS and DFG staff for Central Valley steelhead and spring-run Chinook salmon. NMFS will write a biological opinion for steelhead and a conference opinion for spring-run that covers CVP and SWP facilities and operations through March 2000. If NMFS lists spring-run as a federal threatened species, then the conference opinion could be adopted as a biological opinion. Simultaneously, DWR is applying for a spring-run take authorization under section 2081 of the Fish and Game Code. The state process is not on a parallel track with the federal process because of differing requirements. NMFS will issue a draft federal B.O. about mid-March. When the

final opinion is issued in April, DWR will modify its 2081 permit application to reflect the federal B.O. as a SWP baseline condition. Section 2081 requires a 30-day CEQA review for the application, which means a permit might be issued sometime in June.

Spring-Run Chinook Salmon: The traps in Mill and Deer Creeks were removed at the end of January. A total of 75,000 spring-run juveniles in the lower reach of Butte Creek have been tagged with coded wire tags this year. Catches of juveniles at Knights Landing increased in the last three weeks with spikes occurring in late January and early February in coincident with increases in flows. A few fry in the spring-run length size range have been captured at the salvage facilities.

Winter-Run Chinook Salmon: The IEP winter-run project work team has been reviewing the preliminary juvenile escapement estimate. The final numbers should be available the end of February.

UPDATE: The official NMFS estimate for the number of wild winter-run chinook salmon juveniles entering the Delta during the 1998-1999 season is 454,792. Therefore, the red light and yellow light levels for the period of October 1, 1998 to May 31, 1999 are 9,095 and 4,547, respectively.

Steelhead: A summary of the proposed rule for steelhead trout critical habitat (posted in the Federal Register on February 5) was handed out at the meeting. Comments on this rule must be submitted to NMFS by March 22.

Delta Smelt: The latest midwater trawl survey will be completed tomorrow, February 18. Preliminary results show a wide spread distribution from the Napa River to the western Suisun Marsh. The majority of the population has moved downstream with the increased flows. With the current cold water temperatures there has been no impetus to move upstream. A survey was not conducted in January due to problems with the sampling boat.

Plittail: The Sacramento plittail has been listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act by the USFWS. The listing was posted in the Federal Register on February 8. There is a 30-day grace period before the listing takes affect. USFWS will be in consultation with the USACE and USBR to determine which projects need biological opinions.

Agenda items for Next Meeting . . . March 23